

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 0673

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETEL MARR NO

SUBJ: EXPOSE OF NORWAY'S ACQUISITION OF LORAN
AND OMEGA SYSTEMS

REF: A) STATE 031369; B) STATE 030402; C) OSLO 591

1. MEETING FEBRUARY 14 WITH DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL
GAVE ME OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS HOW HE PROPOSES TO HANDLE
CONTINUED PUBLICITY BEING GIVEN TO CHARGES IN DISSERTATION
BY INTELLIGENCE OFFICER HELLEBUST. FOSTERVOLL
SAID THAT PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI WAS BRIEFED ON CASE SHORTLY
AFTER HIS RETURN FROM AFRICA AND CABINET MEETING HAS BEEN
SCHEDULED FOR NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS WHAT SHOULD BE DONE.
FOLLOWING UP ON HIS INITIAL PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT HELLEBUST'S
ACCUSATIONS REQUIRED CAREFUL EXAMINATION, FOSTERVOLL SAID
THAT HE WAS PLANNING TO PROPOSE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A THREE-
MAN COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF FORMER MINISTER AND DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL
DEFENSE RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENT, FINN LIED, CHIEF JUSTICE MELBO
AND A MEMBER OF STORTING. BY ESTABLISHING CAREFULLY SELECTED
COMMITTEE (INCIDENTALLY RESPONDING TO CALL IN FEBRUARY 14 ISSUE OF
LEFT-LEANING DAILY, DAGBLADET FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SOME FORM OF
COMMITTEE), FOSTERVOLL HOPES TO PREEMPT MOVE BY STORTING TO ESTA-
BLISH COMMITTEE, WHICH COULD BE HARD TO CONTROL AND MIGHT LOOK
FURTHER INTO QUESTION OF AGREEMENTS WITH U.S. THAN FOSTERVOLL
WOULD FEEL TO BE IN NATIONAL INTEREST.

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2. FOSTERVOLL IS STILL AGONIZING OVER QUESTION WHETHER OR NOT TO PERMIT THE MANUSCRIPT TO BE PUBLISHED. HE PROMISED TO GIVE HELLEBUST AN ANSWER BY FEBRUARY 18. WHEREAS HIS CHIEF OF STAFF ZEINER-GUNDERSEN, WHO HAS READ MANUSCRIPT, WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT SUPPRESSED, FOSTERVOLL IS CONCERNED THAT ANY EFFORT TO PREVENT PUBLICATION AT THIS POINT, WHEN COPIES ARE IN THE HANDS OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY, WOULD BE BOTH INEFFECTIVE AND COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.

3. ZEINAR GUNDARSEN IS CONCERNED, FOSTERVOLL SAID, THAT ACCUSATIONS INVOLVE SO MANY OLD DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF LABOR PARTY LIKE FORMER PRIME MINISTER GERHARDSEN, FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER TIDEMANN, ETC. FOSTERVOLL IS FAIRLY CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT GOVERNMENT CAN DEFEND ITSELF EFFECTIVELY AGAINST CHARGE THAT AGREEMENTS WERE NEGOTIATED BEHIND BACK OF STORTING, IF NOT OF GOVERNMENT. HE IS NOT CERTAIN, HOWEVER, WHETHER OTHER ASPECTS OF MANUSCRIPT E.G. ITS ANALYSIS OF NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVING ONE AIRFIELD IN NORWAY (WE ARE TRYING TO FIND OUT MORE DETAILS) MAY NOT PROVIDE FURTHER INCENTIVE TO STORTING TO LOOK INTO WIDE RANGE OF AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED WITH U.S. MENTION OF MAAG AT SEVERAL PLACES IN MANUSCRIPT DID NOT PARTICULARLY DISTURB FOSTERVOLL SINCE HE THOUGHT THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN SUCH AGREEMENTS WAS VERY LOGICAL AND EASY TO EXPLAIN.

4. FOSTERVOLL FELT THAT ARBEIDERBLADET WAS JUSTIFIED IN TRYING TO PREEMPT ATTACKS BY LEFTIST PRESS -- IGNORING FACT THAT RESPECTED LABOR ORGAN THEREBY GAVE MUCH WIDER COVERAGE THAN WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN THE CASE TO WHAT WAS ALSO AN EXAGGERATED VERSION OF HELLEBUST REPORT. MEANWHILE, FEBRUARY 10-15 ISSUE OF COMMUNIST ORGAN FRIHETEN BELATEDLY JOINED THE ATTACK. IT CONTRASTED WHAT IT ALLEGED WERE CLAIMS BY SOCIALIST AS WELL AS NON-SOCIALIST PRESS THAT LORAN C AND OMEGA SYSTEMS WERE PRIMARILY BUILT FOR CIVILIAN SEA AND AIR TRAFFIC WITH ITS OWN LONG-HELD VIEW THAT THE ONLY PURPOSE OF THESE SYSTEMS WAS TO PROVIDE NAVIGATIONAL AND TARGETING DATA TO U.S. NUCLEAR SUBMARINES: FRIHETEN COMPARED THIS CASE WITH THE STATIONING OF THE U-2 PLANES AT BODO AND SAID IT WAS JUST AS IMPORTANT.

5. CHIEF OF FORMIN'S NATO SECTION, FREIHOW, EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR LATEST LANGUAGE (REFTEL A) EXPLAINING ROLE OF LORAN AND OMEGA SYSTEMS. IF PRESSED, HE WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT LORAN C AND OMEGA SYSTEMS WERE USED BY MERCHANT MARINE AROUND TIME THAT ORIGINAL AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED, BUT HE SHARES OUR IMPRESSION THAT INITIAL USE WAS MILITARY WITH CIVILIAN APPLICATION LAGGING BY SOME YEARS. HE ALSO WONDERED, WHETHER, AT TIME AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED, NUCLEAR SUBMARINES DEPENDED ENTIRELY ON LORAN C FOR NAVIGATION OR WHETHER IT COULD BE DESCRIBED AS ONLY ONE

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OF SEVERAL DIFFERENT NAVIGATIONAL SYSTEMS IN USE. MINISTRY IS CONCERNED NOT TO LOSE CREDIBILITY BY MAKING DISOWNING STATEMENT WHICH HELLEBUST, WITH HIS EXPERTISE, IS IN POSITION TO REBUT EFFECTIVELY.

6. NORWEGIAN OFFICIALS RECOGNIZE THAT THEY MAY HAVE TO BITE THE BULLET AT SOME POINT AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THEY COOPERATE WITH NATO IN WIDER RANGE OF FIELDS OF COMMON MILITARY INTEREST THAN IS NORMALLY DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC. GIVEN FACT, HOWEVER, THAT THIS IS YEAR OF VITAL LABOR PARTY CONGRESS AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, LABOR PARTY OFFICIALS ARE EVEN MORE SKITTISH THAN USUAL IN PROVIDING AMMUNITION TO ELEMENTS ON LEFT OF LABOR PARTY AND IN SOCIALIST ELECTORAL LEAGUE WHO WOULD LIKE TO PROVOKE NATION-WIDE DEBATE ON QUESTION OF NORWAY'S ROLE IN NATO, APPEALING TO RESIDUAL NEUTRALIST AND NATIONALIST SENTIMENT. FROM PECULIAR NORWEGIAN VIEWPOINT, FACT THAT U.S. NUCLEAR SUBMARINES CAN USE LORAN C AND OMEGA SYSTEMS BEAMING FROM NORWEGIAN SOIL FOR NAVIGATIONAL OR TARGET-RELATED PURPOSES CAN BE CONSTRUED TO REPRESENT A VIOLATION OF NORWAY'S LONG-STANDING POLICY AGAINST ALLOWING FOREIGN BASES OR OFFENSIVE WEAPONS ON ITS SOIL DIRECTED AGAINST THE USSR. HENCE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S CONCERN TO MINIMIZE THE EXTENT TO WHICH LORAN C OR OMEGA MIGHT ASSIST US TARGETING CAPABILITIES AGAINST THE USSR, AND TO PLAY UP THE CONTRIBUTION THESE SYSTEMS HAVE MADE IN RECENT YEARS TO NORWEGIAN MARITIME SERVICES.

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